United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends UNAVEM II's mandate for two months to 15 September; expresses concern about military and humanitarian situations in Angola; says it would consider arms embargo against UNITA unless peace agreement implemented.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement, demands immediate end to hostilities in UNPAs in Croatia; urges Croatian Government not to reopen Maslenica bridge and Zemunik Airport without agreement between parties concerned in cooperation with UNPROFOR.

+ Secretary-General and Italian Foreign Minister discuss redeployment of Italian UNOSOM II forces outside of Mogadishu; Italy indicates overall support for Operation.

+ Executive Chairman of Special Commission on disarmament of Iraq discusses country's refusal to permit sealing of rocket sites with senior officials in Baghdad.

+ Commission of Experts on breaches of international humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia briefed on recent mission to Sarajevo; will report to Secretary-General in early September and complete work by end of December.

+ ICRC appeals to Bosnian Croat authorities to allow access to Muslim civilians detained in area of Mostar.

+ Azerbaijan appeals to Security Council to condemn Armenian aggression against it; says Armenia's use of force to acquire territory threatens peace in region.

+ Developing countries tell Fish Stocks Conference that new measures needed for surveillance and control of fishing fleets intruding on exclusive economic zones.

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The Security Council today decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) for two months until 15 September. The Council emphasized the importance of an effective United Nations presence in Angola in fostering the peace process and advancing implementation of the "Acordos de Paz". It took that action by adopting unanimously resolution 851 (1993).

The Council expressed grave concern at the deterioration of the political and military situation in Angola, and noted "with consternation" the deterioration of an already grave humanitarian situation. The Council said it was ready to consider acting promptly, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, to expand UNAVEM II's presence in Angola in the event of significant progress in the peace process.

The Council reiterated its demands that the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) end military actions, accept the results of the 1992 elections and abide fully by the "Acordos de Paz". The Council said it was ready to consider imposing a mandatory arms embargo against UNITA, unless the Secretary-General had reported by 15 September that an effective cease-fire had been established, and that an agreement had been reached to implement the "Acordos de Paz" and relevant Council resolutions.

The Council also called on all Member States, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to respond swiftly to the Secretary-General's appeal regarding the emergency humanitarian assistance plan for Angola.

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The Security Council, in a statement read out by its President, Thomas Richardson (United Kingdom), today expressed deep concern regarding the situation in and around the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia. It said it was concerned about hostilities in the UNPAs, particularly by the Krajina Serbs, and demanded that they cease immediately.

The statement recalled Council resolution 802 (1993), which demanded that all parties comply with cease-fire arrangements, and resolution 847 (1993), which called on all concerned to agree on confidence-building measures.

The Council said it attached the highest importance to the reopening of the Maslenica crossing to civilian traffic, and in that context reaffirmed its support for Croatia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, it said that the planned unilateral reopening of the bridge and of Zemunik Airport on 18 July, without an agreement between the parties and in cooperation with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), would jeopardize the objectives of its resolutions. The Council urged the Croatian Government to refrain from that action.

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The Council called on all concerned to cooperate fully with the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and with UNPROFOR to achieve a negotiated settlement to the problem, and to act in a manner conducive to the maintenance of peace. It also called on the parties to assure UNPROFOR's freedom of access to the area surrounding the Maslenica crossing.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has had a discussion with the Italian Foreign Minister regarding the redeployment outside of Mogadishu of Italian forces with the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), according to a United Nations spokesman. He noted that Italy had indicated its overall support for UNOSOM II to the Secretary-General, and said a complete withdrawal of Italian forces was not envisaged.

Yesterday, Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations, said the Italian forces had refused to accept certain tasks assigned by the UNOSOM II Force Commander, and expressed the hope that they would be redeployed soon in the interest of unity of command. Mr. Annan said he expected that Italian force Commander Brigadier-General Bruno Loi would be "rotated" back to Italy.

The spokesman underlined the importance of Italy's contributions to United Nations operations -- not just to UNOSOM II -- and said he expected that the situation would be resolved very quickly.

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Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq, met today in Baghdad with senior Iraqi officials to discuss the country's refusal to allow a Commission team to seal two rocket test sites last weekend. The sites were to have been sealed until monitoring cameras could be installed to ensure that they were not being used for prohibited purposes.

The Security Council had found Iraq's previous refusal to permit the installation of cameras at the sites to be a breach of resolution 687 (1991), which was the basis for the cease-fire after the Gulf War, and a violation of resolutions 707 (1991) and 715 (1991).

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The Commission of Experts set up to examine possible breaches of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions in the former Yugoslavia considered a report concerning Sarajevo at its sixth session in Geneva on 13 and 14 July. The report was delivered orally by William Fenrick, who led a mission to Sarajevo from 24 June to 9 July.

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The Commission decided to continue its efforts to obtain military logistical support for excavations of mass graves at Ovcara and "Sector West", which was in an area in the former Yugoslavia currently under Croat control. If such support were not obtained, a limited investigation without excavations would be undertaken. The Commission also decided to undertake further planning for investigations into systematic sexual assaults, and to prepare for a mission to Dubrovnik to study the destruction of cultural property. It would also discuss Norway's provision of a team of legal and medical experts with that country's Government.

Commission Chairman Frits Kalshoven said an interim report would be submitted to the Secretary-General in early September. The Commission would hold its seventh session in Geneva on 30 and 31 August, and was due to complete its work by the end of December.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today appealed to the Bosnian Croat authorities to allow its delegates access to thousands of Muslim civilians detained in the area of Mostar.

The ICRC reminded the Bosnian Croats of their obligation to treat civilians and detainees humanely. It recalled that under the rules of international humanitarian law accepted by the parties to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, no adverse distinction, such as arbitrary arrest based on ethnic origin, could be made in the treatment of civilians.

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Azerbaijan has accused Armenia of increasing hostility and aggression towards it in defiance of Security Council resolution 822 (1993). In a letter dated 14 July, Armenia appealed to the Council to condemn that aggression and to hold Armenia accountable for its actions.

The letter noted that Armenia had occupied 20 villages in Agdam district and had subjected others in Djebrail district, which bordered on Iran, to heavy shelling. Those incidents demonstrated that Armenia had not renounced its aggressive intentions and was using force to acquire territory, posing a serious threat to security in the region, Azerbaijan argued.

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The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks has been told that new measures are needed for surveillance and control of distant-water fishing fleets intruding on exclusive economic zones.

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Brazil told the Conference yesterday that incursions by such fleets were more widespread than was generally assumed, arguing that the time for irresponsible fishing was over. Sierra Leone made the point that developing countries could not afford effective surveillance of "rapacious" fleets of distant nations, while Tanzania appealed to developed countries to help developing ones to build up surveillance capacity through the transfer of satellite and other technologies.

The Conference is meeting at Headquarters through 30 July to promote implementation of relevant provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

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